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outposts

43

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JOHN SEYMOUR
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DANNIE ABSE

Three Voices

I.

A Woman to a Man

TO own nothing, but to be—
like the vagrant wind that bears
faintest fragrance of the sea
or, in anger, lifts and tears
yet hoards no property;

I praise that state of mind:
wind, music, and you, are such.
All the visible you find
(the invisible you touch)
alter, and leave behind.

To pure being you devote
all your days. You are your eyes,
seemingly near but remote.
Gone, now, the sense of surprise,
like a dying musical note.

Like fragrance, you left no trace,
like anger, you came my way
like music, you filled the space
(by going, the more you stay).
Departures were in your face.

II.

A Man to his Mistress

There are no anchors in my mind.
It's a disorder of my love
that such vagrant signals find
(as if dead lips should move)
drowned echoes in my mind.

Call, and I'll come back fast
more a lover than a thief;
but can a brief sea song outlast
every land locked grief,
your eyes opened and aghast?

Sea wind, sea-calm, is more to me
when you are there to share it.
Entombed within your flesh is sea,
sailing pastures more exquisite
than any sailor's geography.

Lights, now, in the rooms of memory
(faint the fragrance of your skin).
To charcoal shores sea-birds fly
above this bay I loiter in.
Striped, the closing hours of the sky.

III.

A Wife to a Husband

Doth the music always flee?
Who kiss, that they may own,
sing happily, oh happily
of brick on brick till stone
keeps out both wind and sea.

So come back fast, come back slow,
I'll be distance and your home,
every symbol that I know,
church, tower, mosque, and dome,
then by staying, the more you'll go.

Let me breathe in music where
I am nothing but your life:
your designs, directions share,
to be no mistress but a wife,
pluck your meanings from the air.

I'll be all things you would be,
the four wild winds, the seven wide seas,
you'll play with such a gaiety
devastating melodies
till music be my body.

EARLE BIRNEY

Christmas Comes . . . .

THERE was the star, of course,
over the Malvern hills
sudden and bright as a god.
In the commotion three Air Vice-Marshals
roared to the sky in pursuit.
But it was only a nova in Virgo
betraying some cosmic tantrum
that ended a million years back.
In a week the heavens looked safe
and the astronomers' charts were revised.

That shy chanting from clouds
heard by some Queensland sheepmen
was found to be freakish backlash
from the BBC shortwave to Finland.

Jean-Baptiste le Sauvage
created some stir for a while.
His followers gave up their goods to the State
and the Premier of Quebec was pleased;
but when he mailed tracts to the Foreign Legion
—"Do violence to no one"—the usual line—
the Wild Man from Rimouski
was jailed and forgotten
bearskin trousers and all.

But then the Security Council
suddenly fell to agreeing,
and the Supreme Soviet and the U.S. Cabinet—
with wives, cameras, Nasser, ice-cream, Mao,
travel-folders and great sheepish grins—
went touring the world together;
and the Rumour spread.

And when none could be found to defame the Jews
or beat a man for his skin or his notions,
when the great glistening rockets were buried at sea
and faces on streets began opening like flowers
we knew it was true

that somewhere again there had been a Birth
and Christmas . . . Christmas
could be any day and every day now and forever.

Canada.

SUSAN GLYN

Demon's Delight

HOW the talking spark
snaking up the fuse
can amuse the dark,
or the lit express
intrigue unzipped night
by its arrowflight.
And our bright progress,
spiralling time's skies
in our rocket rise
entertains no less,
as the pinpoint glows
towards flash and blaze;
whether of the stark
stick of dynamite
or firework's heat-white
starry-feathered trees,
we can only guess
by the wheeling stars.
But the darkness knows.

EDWIN BROCK

Poet and Peasant

REALLY Walt Disney said it all
those many years ago: There was
the grasshopper-poet caterwauling
through the one-and-nines,
happy in the sun but hungry when
the snow was falling, and there
was the society of black-ants,
neither happy nor hungry, but
enjoying a state which is a way
of being busily between the two.

For a time it looked as though
the parasite might win: He sang,
the sun shone, and the ants ran
to and fro like human beings;
but then the snow, which is a safeguard
of morality, took a hand in things,
and soon the violin strings were
snapping like a nest of A.-P. bombs.

Here was where the enemy became near-
hero, and in the cheaper stalls
a handkerchief was seen to flutter;
a philanthropist was heard to mutter
about the Right To Live, and a rich
widow almost organised a Flag-day.
And yet there was no need for fear:
Walt Disney, who had studied bread-
and-butter politics for years, soon
had those ants eating from his hand.

The final scene. The sun is setting.
What snow is left resembles cottonwool
on all the trees. The interior of
a kind of working-class hotel; lights;
a warm fire,and a total absence of
necessity. Here the metamorphosed poet
wears a red nose and sings from memory
the Currents of the Ant Top Twenty.

O millenium. O Walt Disney, have pity
on this public-enemy, and with an eye
on Circuit-sales enact an act of mercy,
and teach me, red nose and merry voice
intact, to 'set the people free'.

ROY FULLER

In a Railway Carriage

HE reads a poem in a railway carriage
But cannot keep his glance upon the tropes,
And asks himself what is it that he hopes:
Criminal contact, fatherhood or marriage?
The child's grey eyes and tiny, dirty nails;
Its other sex; its beauty, unflawed, slim;
Its unembarrassed consciousness of *him*—
In which, however, he completely fails
To make out any element except
A curiosity sublime: is this
A human commerce far beyond the kiss,
Such as awakened goodness where it slept
Inside the hairy capsule, or invented
Incredible ideas of innocence—
Conception lacking flesh and prurience,
And orifices marvellously scented?

PHOEBE HESKETH

On Cartmel Fell

ORPHAN among the nobbly knees of fells—
Mountain throw-outs mothered by bracken and birch,
Heavy with hawthorn-summer,—the heart returns
Down leading lanes to an unexpected church

Anchored in soundless tides of changing green,
Prow to the hills where centuries' storms have rolled,
For the world to see, yet by the world unseen—
The rocks themselves seem only half as old.

Even Death goes gently here, grass-footed, slow
Between the graves where cuckoo and bluebell-chime
Are sounding the days slipped green from the ring of time—
Here is home that only the homeless know.

Saint Anthony, the hermit, fathers well
This hermit-child withdrawn from grit and grind
To give back peace to a hurt and hunted mind
That runs like a fox to earth on the mothering fell.

DAVID BONAVIA

Growth

I SEE you pass me carrying your seeds of death;
It must be they that weigh upon your brows.
I too must feel your lurking end unless
You raise the sunken corners of your mouth.

Were I to speak, you'd look up quickly, jolt
Yourself from that slow, sliding fall,
And, listening, know no looking-back can halt
The unkind tissue working to its goal.

Therefore I do not speak, but pass you by,
Knowing the slow fruition of your seed,
And, leaving you, myself still seek to hide
The growing of my death that others see.

ALAN BROWNJOHN

Facing Outwards

A GARDEN pillar, where a grey stone lion
Stares with intended anger, always forward
Down between two plain lines of sheltering trees:
This I look at, and walk towards it now,
Some family symbol, cracked with rain and age
And tame through summer's branches; keeping but
A small part of the thing it stood to mark,
The mere pretence to a resounding rage.

Sometimes, indeed, the setting helps it out.
The winter sky has seagulls, vagrant-white,
Wheeling and crying over the bare trees.
And then the lion, on snow-lit afternoons,
Gains enough boldness just to resemble some
Real beast, perhaps, whose tawny dust has long
Vanished, like most of the statue's dignity,
Blown about air down which the snow has come.

But most new seasons crown that head and trunk
With abject harmlessness; memorial to
A long-departed power once making clear
The anger shown to strangers, and the pride;
Suddenly bringing back the period when
The vice inside them could not be made known
Except in terms of fearsome statuary,
Where it seemed virtuous in indignant stone.

MADGE HALES

For Days the Fog

FOR days the fog insisted like a hand
Over the mouth, weaving and walling
Until the mind became accustomed
To half light, a silence stealthy, isolated
And yet in some odd way, comforting. Perhaps
It all came down to the lack of wind,
The absence of awareness of air for ever
Changing its speed, its tiger energy
Full blast or half blast
Its cheek under the skirt.

There is something to be said for silence
Lowered in cloud. Even the dampness
Chilling the neck is preferable to dryness,
For dryness can crack the skin
As it cracks soil. Not to say
The subduedness of traffic. The muted
Turning of wheels, the condition too careful
For horn idiom; quiet as lovers
Locked in a Juliet and Romeo end,
Attended by low speech and downcast lid.

There is this to be said for fog—
It relieves the mind of full daylight,
Slowing the quick worry, for nothing
Seems quite so important as before
In this half light, this half dream
Covering and receding, somnolent as moles.

DAVID WRIGHT

For the Death of a Friend

SHE folded her hands and looked out of a window
Where, with the sun on its back, glistened a spring
Against the pane; or the rain falling sometimes.
So when the good depart they decide they will go,
They wear farewell in their faces and say nothing.

Then among the dead bottles and the disorder,
Absence and laughter, a room of daughters and sons,
O out of an unhoarded loving and giving
A bird with a twig in its beak to her shoulder
Circled and flew; he knew his home was there once.

A yesterday now never over, for nothing
She had could she keep for tomorrow. It became
Today undying; a Chinese room with gin, roses,
Children, sandwiches, and the radiogram playing,
And Love not listening to the radiogram.

FELIX ANSELM

Souvenirs

THINGS and figurines from far-away places
are not fond remembrancers, small trans-
plants of foreign soils and suns,
vaporizers of exotic nostalgia. They are oases
of homesickness, incongruous
between piggy bank and sweet potato plant
on the dresser. They are reminders
of non-belonging . . .

U.S.A.

JEAN KENWARD

A Victorian Photograph

THERE, in the photograph, you may see her staring
Idle as June, her hands crossed on her knee,
And the outline of the bonnet she was wearing
Dark as a tea-leaf by the average sea.
Although it was summer she carried her favourite boa
In deference to the ocean. One could guess
Her gown was a bombazine: she would not lower
The standard of her trim fastidiousness—
Even upon the shores of Wales retaining
The noble stance of a woman who is respected.
She bore an umbrella in case it should be raining,
Not an atom of mute gentility neglected.
Turn the page softly she will never know
Time left her stranded a hundred years ago.

GEOFFREY HOLLOWAY

Water-Skier

FROM the hothouse coach, through sweat-dazzled spectacles,
caught-up and moving with him we admire
how gloriously, audaciously, he goes:
the ice-cold brilliance of a charioteer,
with a shear-edge of indisputable modernity;
leaving it all behind him, curving
through the flak of sunbursts, the shock of buoys,—
his wake distinctive as a vapour-trail,
so vehement, assured.

Moving with him, managing for once
the reins of destiny in fast, dramatic hands,
we also touch fulfilment: in the glass
of lustrous alchemistic envy turn
the dross to dream, to a perspective where
the future is the sun's, iridescent, easy,
the spills spray-out in laughter, and the past
across a classic fiord leans serenely irreproachable:
the wing of a lectern-eagle, brazen gold.

FRED COGSWELL

Black Widow

SHE wound him round with thread
that choked the will to move
and fed till he was bled
of all red-blooded love.

Now gentled by her use
he loves his fate so much
he only dreads to lose
that paralysing touch,

accepting as fair play
her role and his, the more
for having marked her, prey;
himself, the predator.

Canada

GILLIAN STONEHAM

Time Sequence

SHADOWS of leaves on a painted wall:
The wall was home and the season always summer,
And he a child picking up
The scattered apples which would fall
Bruised to the ground as he climbed his Pegasus tree:
These he'd hollow to form the cup
Of a pipe with twig for stem, and fill
With drying seeds of poppy or nasturtium.
Shadows played on the earth, and still
Friendly, among the leaves revolved,
Harbingers of mystery which for the time
Being, he was content to leave unsolved.

Shadows of leaves on a painted wall:
The time is early spring and the house a place
Where he is expected to converse
With other people, whose words appal
The mind that simply seeks to understand;
He must recognise perverse
Or favourable reactions by their tension;
He does not know to whom the house belongs.
Not without hope, he waits for comprehension.

Shadows wildly gesture on
The painted wall, making prophetic pictures:
The time is winter and terror hides
Behind half-open doors; gone
Are the leaves which perhaps were never leaves at all;
The shadow of a bare tree glides
Across the wall like fingers pointing.
Perhaps the sun is also an illusion,
Passing as the disappointing
Glimpse of a Painted Lady that came
To rest on a buddleia bloom and vanished before
He was anywhere near. Despair and hope are the same.

Shadows of leaves on a painted wall.
With new discovery autumn pleases us:
Vivid smells tell the brain
Of earth's reality; now all
Takes on true shape; in autumn light is no
Deception: painted walls again
Are home, and shadows are both hope begun
And memory. The leaves will be renewed,
And time at last unwind and backward run.

ALEC CRAIG

A Charm for Christmas

THE holly for blood, the mistletoe for seed:
the ivy binds my love at need.

The holly for blood, the mistletoe for oil:
the ivy keeps the king in thrall.

The holly for blood, the mistletoe for sweat:
the slave is tied to his labour yet.

The holly for blood, the mistletoe for bread:
the ivy holds the high godhead.

The holly is essential,
the mistletoe phenomenal:
choose which we will for good or ill
the ivy's tendrils follow still.
Nor love, nor power, nor toil, is free,
neither the arcane trinity,
until the blood redeem the tree
where the mistletoe grows and the ivy goes;
and we burn the ivy when no blood flows
in the rite of the mistletoe mystery.

DOUGLAS GIBSON

Success

THE thing to be is not to be committed,
To see both sides of every question and
Not to appear too bright nor yet dim-witted:
The happy medium, you understand,
Will not give trouble nor get out of hand.

The way to dress is quietly (no commotion
Of sensuous colours) with a rolled umbrella;
Learn to be tactful, do not show emotion
(If you have any) to the other fellow:
Grey is the perfect colour for promotion.

Just right of centre is the ideal stance,
Though you respect the other points of view;
Give even foreigners a sporting chance;
At week-ends be a little sporting too;
And go to church if the best people do.

Sex is a subject you had best avoid
Except in jokes you can forget with beer;
Your surplus energy is best employed
In golf if it will further your career;
Love is the danger you have most to fear.

The thing to be is not to be too human,
But neutral in an unobtrusive way,
To change your colours like the chameleon,
To know the game: so the successful say.

Are you surprised I never learnt to play?

REVIEWS

At Attempt at Exorcism: Edwin Brock (Scorpion Press, 10s. 6d.).
Loss of the Magyar: Patricia Beer (Longmans, Green, 10s. 6d.).
The Guinness Book of Poetry 2: (Putnam, 10s. 6d.).

MUCH of the most vivid poetry in this first volume celebrates a working-class childhood rich in human and physical relationships. "A children's playground peels my life away," one poem begins, and if it and a few other poems tend hypnotically to permutate felicities after the manner of Empson without resolving them into a fully articulate whole, there are poems like *When my father died* and *In Memory of my Grandmother* which embody with convincing particularity a child's unsentimental response to family calamities. Mr. Brock is a good craftsman and experiments with a variety of forms in an easy and assured manner. His diction is exact without fuss; his rythms those of good talk, heightened:

> "Perhaps
> only ducks, then, and their noisy summers
> still exist; that and your yellow-coloured legs."

Above all, wit and imagination are everywhere deployed. One recalls the almost Thurberesque grandmother whose death "caused more weeping/than a drowned cat," and the controlled but persuasive beauty of *Parish Eucharist.*

Miss Patricia Beer's poetry is alert, sensitive, poised; but unlike Mr. Brock's, it is largely literary in inspiration. Consider, from *Othello in Cyprus*:

> "His cloak was blown around him like a tulip
> And she could never now unwrap his love.
> Senseless it wuthered, snuffing out
> Her waxen throat
> And guttering hands."

The unsatisfactoriness lies not, of course, in the subject itself, but in the preciosity of the tulip image applied to Othello, in the literary "wuthered" and the strained personification, a favourite device with Miss Beer. Even the noble, well-constructed title-poem has its tragic power blemished by an occasional misapplication of talented perception, as in the reference to fish "like notes of music/ Perched on her rails".

However, there is abundant recompense for these flaws in such poems as *Psyche, Sabine Farm* and above all in *Sir Gawain,* a poem that is itself like a page from a "brilliant book of hours"—the Duc de Berry's, perhaps? A single image here opens on to a legendary, enchanted past:

"His hooves pealed down the silver valley
Where girls with skirts in spate and foaming aprons
Fed geese into the wind."

The *Guinness Book of Poetry* claims to be less specialised than other anthologies and probably is. It includes several prize poems, notably those by Patricia Beer and John Press, whose *The Betrayers* is Metaphysical in its fusion of feeling and intellection within a severely disciplined form. There follow about seventy poems, each of separate authorship, arranged according to an alphabetical list of the poets—an arrangement which emphasises the variety of poems long and short, good and bad, by poets young and, like Padraic Colum who in 1902 worked with Yeats, regenerately old. Irish and Commonwealth poets are well represented and often, by risking more, attain a more compelling success than competence or refined mediocrity—qualities predominant among English poets represented. After a long, exquisitely directionless poem by John Holloway, for instance, it is refreshing to find A. D. Hope's *Australia,* which neglects to be exquisite in having something to say. Indeed, the best poems all have something to say and they incline, perhaps significantly, to stanzaic formality: obvious examples are poems by Abse, Day Lewis, Fuller, Hough, Edwin Muir and, less well known, Brian Giles and George Wood. Anthologies always set one wondering. One wonders here why Auden should be represented by a dull technical experiment and Philip Larkin by ten nerveless lines; or why, with other of his poems to choose from, the editors favoured the inane phallicism of Patrick Galvin's *Little Red Knife.*

RAYMOND WILSON.

New Poems 1959: Edited by Edwin Muir (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 18s.).
Catchment Area: James Harrison (O.U.P., 10s. 6d.).
For the Unfallen: Geoffrey Hill (Deutsch, 12s. 6d.).
A Tale for the Fall of the Year: Margaret Stanley-Wrench (Linden Press, 9s. 6d.).
Descent from Eden: Fred Cogswell (Ryerson Press, Canada, $2.50.).

NEW POEMS 1959 is something of an experiment in that it introduces the work of three new poets (who have all appeared in *Outposts*)—Iain Crichton Smith, Karen Gershon and Christopher

Levenson. Although Mr. Crichton Smith is a lyrical poet with an extraordinary command of colourful images, it would be a mistake to present him solely in that light, for behind his imagery the intellect is clearly in evidence. He has a gift for the striking phrase—

"Light strikes the stone bible like a gong . . ."

and this, combined with a feeling for languages and a sound sense of rhythm, makes even his slightest poems a real pleasure to read. Miss Gershon seems to depend largely upon a feminine instinct and her work suffers from a lack of development, but at her best she is capable of flashes of insight which suddenly light up her poems and reinforce their validity. Mr. Levenson has a wider outlook than either Crichton Smith or Karen Gershon, and such poems as *The Sea-Dykes, Airlift, Autobahn* and *Hungary* reveal his acute concern for humanity. Like Crichton Smith, he can also strike a phrase, but his phrases are more than apt pieces of description—he goes right to the heart of the matter :

"Exiled ambassadors of their heart's country, refugees
Carry their futures in one attache case. . . ."

"In our pure atmosphere
Suspending judgment, who would not feel pledged
To kill or cure? As flocks of crows maraud
The starving acres, each of us plays God."

Certainly Mr. Levenson is a great deal more conscious of the problems of his age than most other poets, and one does not find him amusing himself with literary exercises in this volume. He draws his subjects from life itself, and life as we know it to-day, rather than from literature, yet he never allows his personal feelings to overbalance the poem. It is this unusual awareness and sensitivity which marks him out as a poet with a future; and welcome indeed as a change from those who have held the limelight for the last few years :

"As we veer by reefs of sunlit, foaming cloud, Hanover
Falls into focus : my fellow-traveller, Conscience, and I come down
To earth over ice-packed shrouded meadows and a river,
Racing to the familiar moorings, grown
Back now to their natural scale, we found an end
For flight, a destination carved out of the wind."

Mr. Harrison's first collection, *Catchment Area,* consists mainly of descriptive pieces, though it should be emphasised that the author

is not content merely to describe scenes or incidents at a superficial level, or to draw obvious conclusions. He has an original way of looking at life, exemplified by such poems as *Water* and *The Source,* and brings a rich imagination to bear upon his materials.

If Mr. Geoffrey Hill follows the fashionable mode of suppressing all personal feeling, his work is in a class entirely of its own. Perhaps the outstanding feature of *For the Unfallen* is the exquisite craftsmanship by which every word is given its due weight of meaning and is made to earn its keep within the poem :

> "Created purely from glass the saint stands,
> Exposing his gifted quite empty hands
> Like a conjuror about to begin,
> A righteous man begging of righteous men.
>
> In the sun lily-and-gold coloured,
> Filtering the cruder light, he has endured,
> A feature for our regard; and will keep;
> Of worldly purity the stained archetype."

Mr. Hill is inclined, if anything, to pack too much into his elegiac poems, and the almost frigid air of formality detracts from their immediacy, but there is no mistaking the genuine talent of which they are the fruit.

The narrative title-poem of Margaret Stanley-Wrench's volume, and another long poem entitled *An Old Woman Remembering,* have been broadcast on the Third Programme, but effective as they may be for broadcasting, it is in her shorter poems that Miss Stanley-Wrench's distinctive qualities as a poet are best exhibited. She has a wide range and, though she retains a firm control over her materials, she is not afraid of expressing her feelings as well as her thoughts. Indeed, whether she writes of Henry VIII or the 1956 uprising in Hungary, of *Keats in Chichester* or a hare trapped in the harvest field, whether she takes her subject from history or direct from the contemporary scene, from town or countryside (and she is equally at ease with any of them), compassion is the common factor of all her poems; and this enables her to establish and maintain a sympathetic relationship with her readers :

> "A city, a knot of history, the sum
> Of million lives and years, and yet so small
> And simple, a beehive still, the barley honey
> Now grown to stone, ripened by the golden years.
> And the same peasants drive the same bright share
> Through the enduring ground, their lives, their loves
> As simple still. Rome with its hand shelters them.
> And we who watch, Juvenal, standing apart

With his eyes flayed by suffering and malice,
We, the dissectors, the dissatisfied,
For an instant in the sun, hand touching hand
Lose the torment, the searching, and flesh is stone,
And stone warm flesh, both breathing in the sun."

Dr. Fred Cogswell is a Canadian poet whose work deserves to be better known in this country. His *Descent from Eden* is divided into four sections—Ballads and Fantasies, Sonnets, Epigrams and Satires, and Lyrics—which demonstrate his competence with all forms of poetry and the variety of his approaches to ordinary experience. The sonnets are mainly character-sketches which neatly preserve the special attributes of his subjects within the 14 lines demanded by the form without giving the slightest impression of artificiality. Even so, he is a more significant poet when he allows himself a little more freedom, and such poems as *In These Fall Woods, The Water and the Rock,* and *Lefty,* all from the lyrical section, reveal his poetic stature. JOHN SEYMOUR.

Not From This Night: Isabel M. Clark. 2s. 6d.
Silver Wyre: Olive Culshaw. 2s. 6d.
Those Broken Journeys: Arnold Vincent Bowen. 2s. 6d.
Jon Smith at the Wars: Walter Lorrimer. 2s. 6d.
The Fair Unicorn: Kenneth Prosser. 3s.
The Deserted Vicarage: Philip Gardner. 2s. 6d.
The Labyrinth: Martin Scholten. 3s.

Outposts Publications

IN one sense it could be said that all the booklets in this series follow the pattern set by *Outposts* itself over the last 16 years, for, as previous reviewers have noted, the most striking feature about them is their wide variety of style, outlook and treatment. Certainly no one could accuse the Editor of the series of attempting to promote the work of any school or group by means of these excellently produced booklets which serve a useful purpose in introducing the work of young and unestablished poets to a wider public.

Miss Isabel Clark in *Not From This Night* confines herself to the short lyric, both rhymed and unrhymed. She has a pleasant manner and though her ear is occasionally at fault, she will undoubtedly appeal to the more traditional type of reader. Most of

her poems are concerned with aspects of nature—the foliage of an apple-tree or the "tinted dusk of summer nights" are enough to stimulate her poetic responses. Now and then, however, she manages to hint almost at mysticism by capturing a deeper thought in a neatly-turned phrase such as "the nightfall of an eye refusing sight" in the poem from which her booklet takes its title.

Miss Olive Culshaw is more down-to-earth, drawing from what might seem to be more practical experience and finding her subjects in the local environment. For instance, she writes of a frog trapped in a cellar, of a church service on a wet evening, or *Scorton in April,* and the quiet lanes of Garstang. But despite her feeling for the northern countryside, she does not hesitate in *Acacia Avenue* to praise what is commendable in Suburbia, though this is a less successful poem than the others. She is at her most impressive when dealing with warm personal relationships as in *Safe Custody* and *Complete.*

Those Broken Journeys is the third collection of poems by Arnold Vincent Bowen to appear in this series. Although Mr. Bowen frequently falls back upon a slightly dated vocabulary, there is real feeling and sincerity in his work, and his range is surprisingly wide, from the delicately playful mood of *Mirror-Song* and *Gossamers* to the metaphysical wrestling of *Two Earths.* In this collection, too, there is a sonnet sequence of love poems remarkable for their frankness; a frankness which might have been embarrassing to the reader had the poem not been carefully controlled and directed.

Jon Smith at the Wars and *The Fair Unicorn* both consist of one long poem, but have little else in common. For his account of the fourteenth-century invasion of France, as seen through the eyes of Jon Smith, Mr. Lorrimer has modernized the oldest of all forms of poetry and achieved a kind of heroic verse which is singularly appropriate to his narrative. Unfortunately, he spoils the whole effect by adding a moral which ends with the following couplet:

> "If privates and the poor forget their station,
> Aspiring higher, they surely face damnation."

Presumably, this is meant in a satirical sense, but it could have been omitted with advantage, together with the remaining 16 lines of the conclusion. In *The Fair Unicorn,* a long poem in 20 short sections, Mr. Kenneth Prosser goes to the other extreme by adopting

a symbolist technique which demands more from the reader than might reasonably be expected. There is real poetry here, but it is embedded in lines of introspective speculation and dislocated social criticism in such a way that the reader is compelled to supply the connecting links between the various symbols. Mr. Prosser has an individual vision and it is to be hoped that he will give more attention to the needs of communication in this genre.

Although he expresses his own ideas and his own outlook on life, Mr. Philip Gardner employs a style which seems to owe something to Norman Nicholson :

> "Sun sparkled on the market-clock's thin dome,
> Flashed on the bank's brass plates, the windows
> Of library, school, and bus-shelter, scrubbed with light
> Tombstones sprouting white in the slanting churchyard. . . ."

It is an attractive style and admirably lends itself to the talent Mr. Gardner displays for acute observation and unusual insight; yet at its weakest it tends to trail out into pedestrian comment. Such poems as *The Deserted Vicarage, Amends to Millom* and *Mornings* provide clear evidence that the author is a genuine poet from whom we shall no doubt hear a good deal more.

An American poet, Mr. Martin Scholten, effectively combines a lyrical fluency with a sense of humour and deceptive craftsmanship. He has a disconcerting way of presenting the unpalatable facts of our age so that the reader is caught unawares. His collection,*The Labyrinth,* will be enjoyed by all who like their poetry to have significance for life to-day.

BERNARD FOSTER.

NOTICES

POEMS INVITED. Contributions are invited for a well-known national magazine for whom Howard Sergeant acts as Poetry Editor. Lyrical poems (having a direct impact upon the reader) and light and humorous poems should be sent, together with a stamped addressed envelope, to Howard Sergeant at the *Outposts* address. Generous payment. Length not more than 20 lines.

YOUTH CLUB ACTIVITIES. A mixed Youth Club with headquarters in South East London is planning to form a Literary Group which it is hoped will help prospective writers, and which will produce its own magazine (publishing verse, stories, essays, criticism, reportage, etc.) as a means to this end. Young men and women (under the age of 21) who live in South London and who are interested in helping with or taking part in this experiment are invited to contact the Club Leader, Howard Sergeant, at 209 East Dulwich Grove, London, S.E.22.

OUTPOSTS PUBLICATIONS. The latest additions to the *Outposts* Modern Poets Series are: *The Fair Unicorn* by Kenneth Prosser, *Angel-faced shall the Rain* by Pamela Stephenson, and *Shadow Pantomime* by Rosemary Bazley.

THE HEADLANDS, poems by Howard Sergeant (published by Putnams) can be ordered through local booksellers or obtained from this address, price 7s. 6d. (8s. including postage). "Those who despair of the aims and values of modern poetry should ponder Mr. Sergeant and think again."—*Contemporary Review.*

CONTRIBUTORS to *Outposts* are welcome to the platform of the *Contemporary Poetry and Music Circle* any time they are in London. Meetings open to the public are held on the second Monday of every month from October to May at 7 o'clock at 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, Kensington Road, W.8. Please apply to the Poetry Organiser (Alec Craig), 4 Princes Court, Worsley Road, N.W.3.